Karl Barth Society NEWSLETTER *Number 30 Spring 2005*

# Barth Society met in San Antonio November 19-20, 2004

Our meeting in **San Antonio, Texas** featured the usual Friday afternoon session from 4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. and a Saturday morning session from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. The **Friday afternoon** session included two papers discussing Barth's view of revelation and his theology of the resurrection. The first paper entitled **"Revelation as Event in Barth's Early Theology"** was presented by **Bryan L. Wagoner** of **Harvard University**. The second paper entitled **"Barth on Christ's Resurrection and Eternal Life"** was presented by **George Hunsinger** of **Princeton Theological Seminary**. The **Saturday morning** session began with a paper entitled **"Karl Barth on Gethsemane"** presented by **Paul Dafydd Jones** of **Harvard University/ Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg**. This was followed by a panel discussion of **Eberhard Busch's** new book, ***Karl Barth & the Pietists: The Young Karl Barth's Critique of Pietism & Its Response***, Foreword **Donald W. Dayton**, trans. **Daniel W. Bloesch**, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004) led by **Donald W. Dayton, Azuza Pacific University**. Panelists included **Cherith Fee Nordling** of **Calvin College** and **Christian T. Collins Winn** of **Drew University**.

What follows are summaries of the papers presented at the November meeting, except that there will be no summary of **Cherith Nordling's** presentation here since her full length review of ***Karl Barth & the Pietists*** will appear below.

## Bryan Wagoner

### "Revelation as Event in Barth's Early Theology"

According to Bryan Wagoner the interrelation between the early Barth's concepts of "memory" or "recollection" (*Erinnerung*) and "anticipation" or "expectation" (*Erwartung*) provides a novel and illuminating lens through which to examine the development of Barth's theology of revelation and election. In particular, Barth's early use of thorny concepts such as the "memory of God," "memory of eternity," "Origin of origins," and the implicit possibility of a latent "point of contact" between God and humanity have their orientation in Barth's early understanding of memory and expectation. While each of these concepts and themes is perceived to be inimical to the "later Barth," the gradual development of his thought during the 1920's and '30's ultimately allowed Barth to conceptually free up theological space to assess the interplay between the subjective life of faith and the objective event of revelation in more nuanced ways.

Tracing the development of Barth's notion of "memory/recollection" and his increasing use of "expectation/anticipation" from the "Tambach lecture" and the first edition of the *Römerbrief* in 1919 through the first volume of the *Church Dogmatics* (1932 and 1938) helps to elucidate and situate an important transition in Barth's thought. Building on Bruce McCormack's influential thesis, Wagoner suggests that directing attention to the dialectical pairing of "memory" and "expectation" will yield important insights into Barth's early theology of revelation. Definitively locating a "turn" in Barth's thought is of less concern than providing a new way in which to look at the shift in thought evidenced through Barth's development of the concepts of memory, expectation and the temporal "now" of revelation.

Barth's 1919 "Tambach lecture" provocatively describes God as the "Origin of origins."[1] In the same lecture, Barth exhibits enthusiasm concerning the human capacity for knowledge of God, affirming "the thesis of humanism that even fallen man is the bearer of the divine spark."[2] Here Barth defines the role of recollection/memory as the epistemic grounding of revelation: "We have sought to *recollect* what we had forgotten and continually forget – God's revelation and our own faith."[3]

The first *Römerbrief* continued several themes from the "Tambach lecture," including the concepts of memory and origin (*Ursprung*). When speaking of the human connection to the "origin," in the first edition of the *Römerbrief,* published in 1919, Barth notes:

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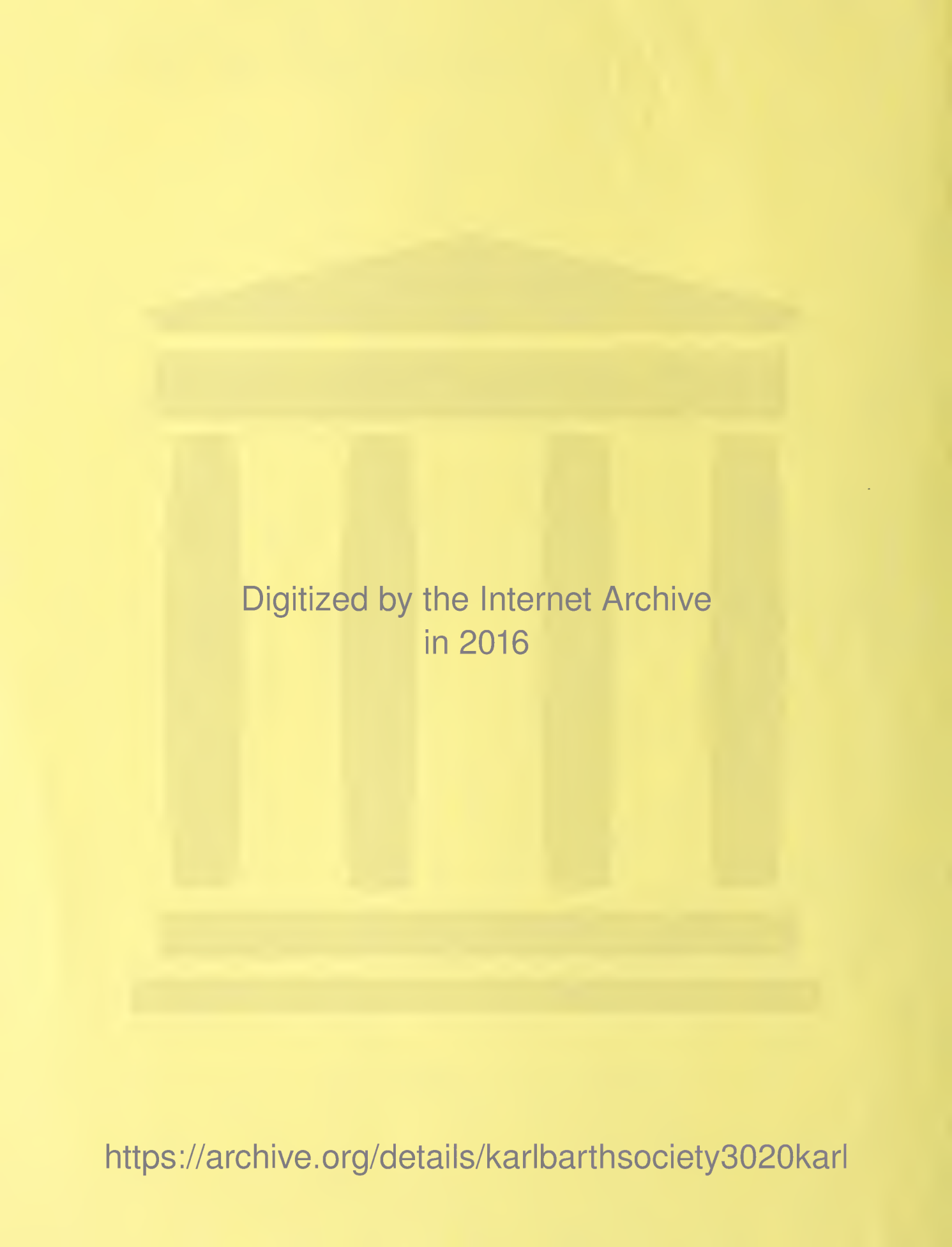
[1] Karl Barth, "The Christian's Place in Society," in *The Word of God and the Word of Man.* trans. Douglas Horton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1935), 294.

[2] Barth, "The Christian's Place in Society," 310.

[3] Barth, "The Christian's Place in Society," 295.



> The human person cannot separate herself from her origin, but rather in all of her thought, will, and feeling, the memory of it accompanies her as warning and admonition, as the actual, the native, the central focus of her striving, as prerequisite and goal of her ways. If she suppresses this memory, she commits an unnatural act. She becomes thereby unfaithful not only to God, but also to herself. For God can be revealed. We have forgotten that.[4]

Wagoner notes that Barth suggests that the memory of this elusive *Überwelt* (heaven?) has important consequences in terms of human culpability before God for those who reject or ignore this origin and memory. The connection between memory, capacity and culpability becomes even more central in the second edition of the *Römerbrief* where Barth argues that humanity's relationship to God, although severely deformed by sin, "can be re-established only through the – *clearly seen* – memory of eternity breaking in upon our minds and hearts."[5]

Following Pauline logic, Barth reasons that those who have "forgotten," and those who display a "lack of humility...[and] lack of recollection"[6] of the "clearly seen" things of God may find themselves "without excuse" *coram Deo*: "Our memory of God accompanies us always as problem and as warning."[7] The now occluded relationship between God and humanity is hindered by a barrier and marked by an absence, but, according to Wagoner, it does not suggest absolute separation: the vestigial function of the "spark" of memory seems to signify some remaining connection between humanity and God, not accessible as definitive or objective knowledge,[8] but as an ambiguous "shadow knowledge," signaling an awareness of an absence.

The concept of "memory" in the second edition of the *Römerbrief* should not be strictly regarded as a negative concept. In addition to the negative limit or awareness of an absence manifest in Barth's use of the concept of memory explored in the *Römerbrief*, Walter Lowe suggests that memory may function in a more positive sense when understood ethically in terms of repentance. Barth does not explore the connection explicitly, but Wagoner suggests that the ethical posture of repentance is predicated upon memory: both a memory of God's gracious acts on humanity's behalf, and also a memory of the actions and offenses committed against God and neighbor. Perhaps one might say positively that repentance, grounded in the memory of God and met with divine grace, is Barth's implicit "point of contact" between humanity and God.

If memory recalls God's gracious acts in the past, expectation awakens hope for God's present and continuing action in the life of God's people. In one sense Wagoner believes "expectation" functions as the place marker for Barth's developing eschatology.[9] Barth's earliest use of the language of expectation largely centers on the proclamation and witness of the Church. He notes that not only do individuals and groups bring expectations to God and to scripture, but additionally *scripture itself has its own expectations* and it addresses those expectations to individuals and communities — primarily the Church,[10] and God "arrives on the scene" in the midst of this dual expectation.[11]

During his years in Bonn, Barth's 1931 work on Anselm and his 1935 *Credo* lectures, Barth nuanced his understanding of memory more positively, and he added expectation more explicitly; together in dialectical tension, Barth suggested, the two concepts formed the appropriate hermeneutical lens for theological exegesis. The language of awakening or actualizing the memory of God emerges in *Anselm,*[12] where Barth explores the latent potentiality in humanity which is awakened by revelation.[13] Similarly in *Credo* Barth outlined his method of theological exegesis[14] explicitly in terms of recollection and anticipation.

Revelation, Barth insists, is always an *event* and as such, the mere retention of a memory is insufficient for anything other than to evoke the awareness of its absence. Positively, Barth states that each "moment in

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[4] Author's translation — Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief, erste Fassung* 1919, hrsg. Hermann Schmidt (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1985), 28.

[5] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*. trans. from the 6th ed. by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 48; henceforth R2, cited in text.

[6] R2, 46.

[7] R2, 46.

[8] R2, 221.

[9] Barth, "The Christian's Place in Society," 299.

[10] Barth, "The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching," 116, 121.

[11] Barth, "The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching," 122.

[12] Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, trans. by Ian W. Robertson (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1962), e.g. 19-20.

[13] This is a view which Barth came to explicitly reject by the time he composed the second volume of the *Dogmatics.* See, *inter al.*, Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II, 1, 182, 194.

[14] Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. by John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 259-60.

time...is itself a stranger to the *Now*,"[15] and thus each moment, each experience, each recollection and anticipation, must be renewed by being drawn closer to the *now* of God's continually unfolding revelation. The event character of revelation prevents it from being something which can simply be recollected; like the "momentary view of a bird in flight,"[16] genuine revelation continually breaks into our individual and communal memories and reorders them.

When Barth began work on the *Church Dogmatics*, memory/recollection ceased to function primarily as an epistemic limit. Interestingly, Barth uses various formulations of the pairing "memory and expectation" (*Erinnerung und Erwartung*) over 80 times in the *Church Dogmatics,* with the majority of occurrences found in volumes I.1 and I.2.[17] Scripture attests to the Word insofar as it reflects the event of God's presence in time in Christ — and as such, it meets its hearers and readers as the dynamic event of God's presence, both past, present, and expected.[18] In the *Dogmatics*, the Word does not so much awaken a capacity, but it rather creates the possibility for any reception in the actuality of its having been given by God; therein it destroys any notion of a human capacity for the Word of God as an idol. Over and against mechanical recollection of scripture or anything else as the basis of expectation, Barth suggests something like the ability, indeed the gift, to remember rightly. This gift of recollecting rightly originates in revelation itself, and it informs the theological and dogmatic task.

Recognizing the ambiguity and self-orientation of memory, Wagoner takes Barth's implicit, though underdeveloped thesis to be: *individual and communal memories should be interpreted through the lens of the character of God and only then used as the basis of expectation or action.* This simultaneously acknowledges both the positive claim that God has indeed spoken in the past in individual and communal lives and in scripture, and also the negative claim that all memories are ambiguous and tend to privilege the one(s) doing the remembering. Expectation based purely or largely on memory tends to privilege the existing order and power structures. Expectation which has no concrete investment concerning the way in which God will manifest God's steadfast, constant and gracious presence in our time, however, allows the space and possibility for hearing the Word of God *anew*.

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[15] R2, 499.

[16] Barth, "The Christian's Place in Society," p. 282.

[17] According to the search mode on *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik on CD-ROM*, KAB Konsult AG, Klippan, Sweden.

[18] CD I.1, 111.

# George Hunsinger

## "Barth on Christ's Resurrection and Eternal Life"

Hunsinger began by noting that there were two puzzles in Barth's thinking: 1) in *CD* III.2 he insists that this life is the only one we get. Eternal life cannot be equated with the prolongation of this life. It does not alter this life. The question that arises here is whether or not Barth is leaving us without objective immortality—God is aware of us—but it seems to have no further reality for us; 2) for Barth, eternal life is not merely a new perspective on this life—it will be revealed to us what our life was. Eternal life is essentially noetic but not ontic. Neither of these views is correct according to Hunsinger. Underlying each is a common error. These puzzles fail to grasp how Barth's dialecticial frame shapes his thought on this subject.

"You shall surely die" offers textual support for the first puzzle because it stresses our radical finitude. There is no "who" (person) without the "what" (temporality) and thus with the "who" we are who we are and will be who we were. In death we cannot continue to exist in time. Heinrich Vögel was Barth's ally and Barth's conversation about Vögel's daughter (one of seven children) who suffered from encephalitis raised the question about whether there was continual suffering in eternal life or if she would walk again as others walk. Barth took the position that she would not walk again as others walk, according to Hunsinger. Still, in the light she would be placed near to the heart of God. Nothing in this life, for Barth, has ever been in vain—"I have loved you in your suffering"—this may be understood then; but she will never change. On the death of his own son Matthias in a mountain climbing accident, Barth's sermon on 1 Cor. 13:12 stressed that "Knowing as we are known" implies that he can see now what we cannot see since he is face to face with God. This, according to Hunsinger, sounds like a noetic account of eternal life.

Finally, Hunsinger believes that "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51) plays a dialectical role here. Resurrection means the whole person is raised from the dead. The whole person is not just a psyche, but a somatic unity. The whole person is raised into eternal life with God. Barth has in mind a Hegelian pattern according to Hunsinger. This temporal life is made eternal in a new and unthinkable form. Because of this it is silly to ask how old will I be because the whole life history is taken up into eternity. In *CD* IV.3 our life is seen as mortal but by grace it is made to put on immortality. There is also a sense of God's *otherness* in Barth's understanding of eternal life. Christ is our contemporary by virtue of his resurrection. Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Hence, Christ

is still an acting subject doing new things—he is not just past—he is the one who makes all things new.

# Paul Dafydd Jones

## "Karl Barth on Gethsemane"

How does Barth understand the humanity of Christ? One way to answer this question is to examine Barth's remarks on Jesus' travail in Gethsemane, found chiefly in a medium-sized excursus in *Church Dogmatics* IV.1, §59. These remarks present Jesus' humanity as a history in motion, an event of responsibility, a struggle that marks God's life, and the basis of a covenant that rejects sin and evil in favor of freedom and love. All of which spurs a further claim: in light of the Gethsemane excursus, Jesus' humanity might be considered a ceaseless act of prayer.

Before expounding this thesis in more detail, Jones offers a few words about the interpretive stance here assumed. Bruce McCormack is right, Jones believes, to view the doctrine of election as foundational for the Christology of the *Dogmatics*. Two particular points, on this front, ought to be emphasized. First, election means, for Barth, that God has determined "Godself," in God's second way of being, to be Jesus Christ. God decides upon an identity that includes the life of Jesus of Nazareth; God's renders this human being, in his actuality and particularity, identical with "Godself" *qua* Son. Second, election is the divine act whereby God establishes a covenantal relationship with humanity. The ground of the covenant is the ontological and volitional complexity of Christ: it is precisely his agential correspondence with God's will that grounds the possibility of our doing likewise. Thus, characteristic of Christ's being is "steadfastness on both sides" (CD II.2, 125). ["CD" identifies the English translation of the *Dogmatics*. "KD" refers to the German edition. When only "KD" is noted, the translation is by Jones] In Christ, God's advance *qua* Son is recognized, affirmed, and complemented by Jesus as a human being. The task of Christological reflection, on these terms, is to examine both God in God's self-determination as Jesus Christ and Jesus' human "response" to God.

The magnificent Christological architecture of *Church Dogmatics* IV would not be possible without these foundations: Barth's reworking of the *munus triplex* is a massive elaboration of the significance of Christ's being the "electing God" and the "elected human." At the same time, the expanse and precision of Barth's doctrine of reconciliation depends, in large part, on the careful work of *Church Dogmatics* III. Barth here developed categories that describe the ontology of the human, in light of Jesus' paradigmatic life: history, responsibility, prayer, and freedom being especially important markers of genuine human subjectivity (see *CD* III.2, §§44 and 45). Categories such as these ensured that Barth's anthropology would be as robust and nuanced as his doctrine of God; they enabled him to consider the covenant from both sides.

Paragraph 59 – the material opening of the doctrine of reconciliation and the immediate environment for the remarks on Gethsemane—illustrates nicely how election and Barth's treatment of the "real human" (CD III.2) converge. The paragraph's initial claim, that the atonement is "history," is especially significant. On one level, Barth signals hereby that his doctrine of election has transformed the agenda of Christological inquiry. The concrete and particular life of Jesus Christ, as opposed to abstract creedal claims about the identity of the God-man, governs dogmatic reflection about Christ's being and activity, for it is *this* particular and irreducible identity that God has assigned to "Godself" as Son. Indeed, the three sections of §59 ("The Way of the Son of God into the Far Country"; "The Judge Judged in our Place"; "The Verdict of the Father") show Barth tracking Jesus' life from cradle, to cross, to resurrection, identifying the Christological narrative upon which reconciliation depends. On another level, Barth draws on the categorial advances of *Church Dogmatics* III in order to describe still more clearly what "steadfastness on both sides" entails. Thus, for example, he proposes that Jesus' human obedience corresponds to the Son's obedience to the Father. The obedience of the Son is not an exclusively intra-triune event: it includes the human willingness of Jesus of Nazareth to follow and enact the will of the Father, even unto death.

While Barth's remarks on Gethsemane are continuous with the perspective of §59, they fill out Barth's understanding of Jesus' humanity intriguingly. First, Barth here underscores that Jesus' human life is a *history in motion*. At prayer, Jesus comes to realize what it means for him to be flesh and therefore subject to judgment. Previous understandings of his person and task are outpaced: Jesus recognizes now that he must play a uniquely negative role in God's soteriological narrative. He is asked to be the one through whom divine justice and love reach terms, so that the punitive death of the "old" human is the advent of the "new." And this recognition shocks. "Es brach jetzt über ihn herein" (KD IV.1, 293): the awareness that God wills to make Jesus the punishment for sin now "breaks over him" with full force. Might this have overwhelmed him? Might Jesus have therefore refused this future? Barth does not bury such questions. He acknowledges that "it is not self-evident that He should be given this cup to drink and that he should take it upon Himself to drink it" (CD IV.1, 238); also that "it was one thing to enter and continue on this way, it was another to tread it to . . . its necessarily bitter end" (CD IV.1, 266). Though dogmatics knows the victory of God in Christ,

then, it also reminds faith of the human struggle along the way. Jesus' justificatory death on the cross was never a "done-deal"; it was, and is, a living act inclusive of his human decision.

Second, Barth uses Gethsemane to describe Jesus' humanity as an *event of responsibility*. More specifically: in presenting Jesus' struggle as a "remarkable historical complement to the eternal decision taken in God Himself, one which was not taken easily, but with great difficulty, one to which He won through, which He won from (*abgerungen*) himself" (CD IV.1, 238-239; KD IV.1, 262), Barth's analysis recalls the remarks of *Church Dogmatics* III.2 on responsibility. One side of responsibility is acknowledgment: the event whereby the human being endeavors to discern God's will, subsequent to God's enclosure of him/her within the realm of divine knowing. Thus in asking, "Does all this have to happen?" (CD IV.1, 264), Jesus strives to discriminate exactly what God asks of him. He "raises the question afresh" (CD IV.1, 264)—must the end of his life be the cross? – even though he had "set his face" towards Jerusalem long ago. The other side of responsibility is obedience: pledging oneself to the performance of the "commission" that God sets forth. Thus, amidst Jesus' struggle to identify God's command, Barth emphasizes that Jesus *decides* to take up the cross. Jesus is in no way "led," resignedly, to his death. His "is decidedly a positive prayer," which is "in its open core a *radiant yes*" (KD IV.1, 298) that recommits him to the execution of God's will. The result of Jesus' private wrestling with God—a wrestling more extreme, one must say, than Jacob's struggle with the angel—is his "stand[ing] upright with a supreme pride" (CD IV.1, 270), and heading towards Judas' treacherous kiss.

Third, Barth notes the *consequences of Jesus' struggle for God and humanity*. Most obviously, Jesus' prayer marks his human participation in the drama of justification and salvation. Thus: "Thy will be done" means that He put the cup to His lips, that He accepted the answer of God as true and holy and just and gracious, that He went forward to what was about to come, *thus enabling it to happen*" (CD IV.1, 271, my italics). It is not only that Jesus resolves to obey; it is also that Jesus' human obedience forms a constitutive element of God's program of justification. God's grace is such that even in punishing humankind, God reserves a space for Jesus' genuine human agency and his "contribution" to the remaking of humankind. More subtly, Barth sees in Gethsemane consequences for God's very being. Having embedded Jesus' life "inside" of "Godself," God now absorbs a history in which Jesus asks, "Does all this have to happen?" God in a sense *undergoes* Jesus' questioning, for Jesus' struggle sounds and resounds within the divine life. Thus, "in the relationship between the Father and the Son [there is] a hesitation (*Aufhalten*) and delay (*Zögern*), in which the question of another possibility arises—other than the divine and necessary actuality that has been relentlessly realized previously" (KD IV.1, 291). Jesus' human uncertainty is held over in God's being exactly because God elects to be *this* human, in God's second way of being. Within the divine Trinity's Mozartian interplay, one might say, there is always the haunting counterpoint of Beethoven's question, as Jesus asks "Must it be? It must be!"

Fourth and finally, in viewing Gethsemane as the staging ground for the justification of humankind, Barth identifies a key moment in the establishment of a *covenant in which God and humankind renounce sin and evil*. Although God has rejected evil eternally, it somehow still harasses creation, animated by humankind's sinful rebellion against God. To secure a covenantal relationship with humanity, then, God wills that God's eternal rejection of evil be reiterated in time. Jesus' task is to embody this reiteration. More, he must endure the "coincidence of the divine and satanic will and work and word [that] was the problem of this hour, the darkness in which Jesus addressed God in Gethsemane" (CD IV.1, 268); he must embrace the fact that God's punishment of humankind involves, strangely, an instant in which evil's work is "validated" and approved even by God. For only when evil runs amok and leads Jesus towards the cross, does it self-destruct, consumed by its own negativity. It is fair to say, in fact, that Jesus' God-forsakenness "begins" in Gethsemane: from this point, Jesus encounters only God's silence and the assault of evil. Yet in deposing himself thusly, Jesus affirms, definitively, the human side of the covenant. Negatively, he suffers God's reiterated rejection of evil. But positively, his obedience to God is the making of the human who lives and acts in genuine companionship with God.

In view of these four interrelated points, hopefully the suggestion above—that Barth views Jesus' humanity as an event of ceaseless prayer—makes a little more sense. Certainly, Barth's description of Jesus' travail in Gethsemane provides the occasion for him to articulate his deepest insights regarding Christ's identity as *vere homo*. In the garden, Jesus conclusively knows and accepts his identity as elected *and* rejected. He neither possesses this identity "automatically," nor does he know God's will "in advance" (Barth, in fact, would be troubled by uncritical assertions of Jesus' "omniscience"). Rather, in prayer, Jesus is led to trace and retrace the shape of the divine will. And through prayer, Jesus discerns and takes up his distinctive commission: reiterating the rejection of evil, ensuring the punishment of sin, securing the salvation of humankind, and grounding a covenantal relationship of love and freedom. Gethsemane is but one instance of

Jesus' human "steadfastness" before God, but, at the same time, a snapshot of the whole.

Jones offers a concluding word. If persuasive, this analysis has relevance both for the way one reads Barth's Christology and for thinking about Christian life in its existential and political dimensions. On one level, Jesus' struggle not only imprints itself upon the life of God, but also upon human being *per se*. If Jesus struggles thusly, so can we struggle with God. Gethsemane reminds us that fear and doubt are legitimately part of faith: in light of Jesus' struggle in Gethsemane, one might even consider these to be necessary elements of a life "hid with Christ." On another level, Barth's treatment of Gethsemane points towards a political agenda of contemporary relevance. The dogmatic ground of such agenda is of course Jesus' "past" history. But while looking "back" to Christ, Christian politics necessarily looks "forward" towards the future that Jesus announces—a future liberated from sin and evil. Accordingly, there must be absolutely no dogmatic support for the claim that "evil" operates in the world, unchecked, in the form of an individual or a group. Such would imply that Christ's death was insufficient, that evil had not been categorically "dealt with" by Jesus' death. Equally, the Christian may not participate in political projects that seek to "punish" and "destroy" individuals or groups in light of their (real or supposed) wrongdoing. Christian political life certainly aims to engage and transform the world. But punishment has happened; it need not be repeated.

To embrace genuinely Christian doubt, and to take up this political agenda, is of course a tremendous challenge. Living beyond Gethsemane is a future that must be "won through," by the grace of God; it is never a possession of the present. But, in the words of one of Barth's own prayers: "Lord, because we believe with certainty that you have overcome, and that with you we too have already overcome, we call upon you now. Show us but the first step of the road to freedom, won at such cost." (*Prayer*, 70).

# Panel Discussion of Eberhard Busch's *Karl Barth & the Pietists*

**Donald Dayton** began the discussion by introducing Eberhard Busch's book and giving background historical and theological information to situate the thinking of both Busch and Barth. This was followed by presentations by **Cherith Nordling** and **Christian T. Collins Winn**. What follows is a summary of **Winn's** remarks and then the formal book review written by **Nordling**.

Winn began by noting that while it might seem odd to suggest that Pietism had anything other than a negative role to play in Barth's thinking, Eberhard Busch's book actually dispels that. Busch describes Barth as a "critical friend or friendly critic" of Pietism rather than its avowed enemy. While this is an unusual view, it is not unique because Winn notes that other American evangelicals such as Donald W. Dayton and Donald G. Bloesch have also seen that Barth's approach to Pietism was not entirely negative. Busch's German monograph on Barth and Pietism was neither the first nor the most recent according to Winn. Still, its appearance in English is important for opening new avenues of research for American scholars. In his paper Winn posed the question of where such scholarship should proceed from here and proposed certain issues that needed to be explored. In 1922 Barth wrote to his friend Eduard Thurneysen explaining that his reading plans for Christmas vacation included a book by Gottlob Schrenk on Cocceius that he hoped would illuminate his own Göttingen experience in relation to the rest of his life. In a second letter early in 1923 Barth wrote that he had also read Calvin, letters of Luther, a new book by Schrenk on the Kingdom and the Covenant in early Protestantism noting that the Württemberg doctrine of the Kingdom that is of great concern to the Reformed goes back to Bengel and Cocceius to Calvin while the nature, law and grace scheme of the Federal theologians, which Cocceius also accepted, originated with the Baptists and Zwingli. Winn sees three issues arising in connection with these two letters: 1) the problem of Pietism; 2) "Barth's biography"; and 3) the positive influence of Pietism on Barth's eschatology.

To begin with, Pietism is not a simple entity but an internally diverse phenomenon. Winn notes that there are eight different forms of Pietism 1) the early Pietism of Spener; 2) the Pietism of Halle and August Hermann Francke; 3) the Radical Pietism of Gottfried Arnold and other separatists; 4) the Reformed Pietism of Gerhard Tersteegen; 5) the Pietism associated with the Moravian revival and Count von Zinzendorf; 6) the rich tradition of Württemberg Pietism; 7) the Pietism of the *Erweckungsbewegung* or "revival movement" of the nineteenth century associated with figures like Tholuck, Wichern, and von Bodelschwingh; and 8) the form of Pietism that Busch focuses on in his study, that associated with the *Gemeinschaftsbewegung* or "community movement." If one were to answer the question of whether or not Pietism had any positive influence on Barth there is no doubt in Winn's mind that the form that had the greatest impact on Barth was Württemberg or Schwäbian Pietism. Even after his supposed break with the Schwäbian J. T. Beck (and his

organic eschatology!), Barth still saw himself as indebted to this tradition and had internalized it to such an extent that it became a part of his own theological identity. Barth's ongoing engagement with the exegesis of J. A. Bengel and his lifelong interest in the eschatology of the two Blumhardts also shows a positive influence of this tradition on Barth.

According to Winn a full picture of Barth's relationship to Pietism must include Pietism's own internal diversity in order to see what aspects Barth was open to and those to which he was closed.

In connection with Barth's "Biography" Winn notes that while reservations are in order about drawing implications for his theology from his biography, some understanding of the context within which his theology developed will help understand his relation to Pietism. He believes that Busch's work shows in an exemplary way how Barth was already rooted in a moderate form of Pietism. He was fond of the hymns of Abel Burckhardt; he matriculated at the Lerber school in Bern; his family was connected to many key Pietists such as J. T. Beck; his father, Fritz Barth, a theological positivist, was a "friendly critic or critical friend" of Pietism.

Barth's attraction to the more radical or independently minded of the Pietists is another "biographical" issue that will need exploration. Anyone moderately familiar with Barth's life and work should be acquainted with the independence of thought as well as the willingness to identify with theological outsiders, both of which he showed throughout his life. This personal trait also appears to have influenced Barth in regard to his relationship to Pietism. As Busch shows, he was never very interested in the "Churchly Pietists," like Spener and Francke. On the other hand, even during his "Liberal" period, he was drawn to figures like Gerhard Tersteegen, F. C. Oetinger, J. T. Beck and the two Blumhardts, all of whom stand out as thinkers possessed of an independence of thought and life. The issue that will need clarifying here is whether Barth was attracted to the theology of Pietism that these individuals represented or whether he was attracted to the independence of these individuals vis-à-vis their own Pietistic environment. Clarifying this will help us to understand if Barth was interested in the questions of "Pietism" or if he was interested in the questions of certain independently minded "Pietists." At this point, at least, there is just as much evidence to suggest the latter as the former.

Finally, while Busch believes that Barth's interaction with Pietism led to his own reconstruction of such themes as "conversion," "the new birth," "sanctification," and "holiness," Winn suggests that Pietism also had a positive influence on Barth's eschatology. The Württemberg tradition which was most influential for Barth is strongly shaped by eschatology. Key motifs include: 1) the Kingdom of God was intimately related to history so that God must be seen as "reviver of souls" and "transformer of the world;" 2) the fullness of the Kingdom implied "*apokatastasis*;" 3) overcoming perceived dualism between body and soul made space for healing and the miraculous stressing that God's Kingdom was to be embodied on earth; 4) there was a definite concern for political and social issues; 5) belief in the Kingdom led to criticism of the subjectivist orientation within Pietism. Winn contends that it is the eschatological and social concept of the Kingdom of God within Württemberg Pietism which shapes these motifs.

Winn suggests that if Barth's eschatology is read in light of this tradition many of his own distinctive emphases become clearer. Issues like the non-speculative and Christological character of his eschatology; his emphasis on the eschatological nature of hope; his integration of eschatology and ethics, especially social and political ethics; his understanding that the Kingdom of God will come in history to renew the face of the earth; and his agnosticism regarding a possible *apokatastasis* are all understood more readily in the light of Württemberg Pietism. Winn does not want to suggest that Barth simply reiterated the positions of Württemberg Pietism, nor would he deny the importance of Franz Overbeck or Johannes Weiss for Barth's eschatology. But he does want to suggest that the dynamics and issues in Barth's eschatology are more readily grasped when viewed in the light of Pietism and especially the Württemberg version of it. Winn believes that further research in this direction will show that Barth appropriated the concerns of this particular tradition and critically reconstructed it.

In conclusion, Winn believes that any discussion of Barth and Pietism will prove most fruitful if it is able to shed more light on certain aspects of Barth's theology and theological development. Attention should be focused on the Württemberg tradition and its eschatology. Such a focus will help to further clarify the development, shape and central concerns of Barth's eschatology as well as his theology more generally. If such illumination is forthcoming through this line of inquiry then the question of Barth's relationship to Pietism will make a serious contribution to Barth studies.

## BOOK REVIEW

***Karl Barth & the Pietists: The Young Karl Barth's Critique of Pietism & Its Response.*** By EBERHARD BUSCH. Trans. Daniel W. Bloesch. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. Pp. xv + 330. $27.00.

This translation of Eberhard Busch's original *Karl Barth und die Pietisten* (first published in 1978 by Christian Kaiser Verlag) offers English-speaking audiences access to his fine analysis of the "dialogue" between the early Barth and an important, early twentieth-century Pietist movement known as the *Gemeinshaftsbewegung* ("community people"). The *Gemeinshafsbewegung* arose from within the established Protestant church in Switzerland and Germany. In common with other Pietist movements, they emphasized an experiential "inner life" of faith activated and accompanied by the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit. The experience of dynamic fellowship with God, lived out in Christian community with other "born again", "spiritually alive" believers, was at the heart of their understanding of the New Testament. Hence they saw themselves as a vital witness to living biblical tradition and personal Christian faith in the midst of "dead orthodoxy" and liberalism. In their self-understanding as faithful interpreters and defenders of Biblical truth, they generally ignored dismissals or attacks from their theological "foes".

Hence they were wholly unprepared for the kind of critique they found in the second edition of the *Römerbrief*. Pietism was being challenged from an authoritatively *Biblical* perspective. They were suddenly dislocated by Barth from an exclusive position as those who "speak for God" and, in terms of direct experience of God, were instead *re*located alongside their greatest theological adversary, liberal theology! As certain members felt goaded into responding, a kind of confrontational "dialogue" began.

Busch's study is limited to Barth's writings up to 1930 and the literature of the *Gemeinshaften* through the 1920s. He begins by asking (1) *which Pietists* was Barth referring to in his critique, and thus was it *accurate*? and (2) how did the Pietists respond to Barth's critique, and did they properly understand his method or concerns? The first question requires taking into account at least three historically interrelated phenomena; the Pietism of the eighteenth century, the spiritual awakening of the nineteenth century and the *Gemeinshaftsbewegung* (community movement) of the twentieth century. Because Barth's critique in the second *Römerbrief* was directed more toward the first two movements, Busch seeks to identity those among the *Gemeinshaftsbewegung* who so closely identified with the concerns of these movements that they believed themselves targeted as well. (The introduction and appendices by translator Daniel Bloesch and the foreword by Donald Dayton help to identity these different movements and their place in the larger landscape of twentieth-century Pietism.)

The book is organized in three main parts. The first part covers Barth's developing critique of Pietism, including the positive influence of Barth's Pietistic roots and his attempt to integrate a particular understanding of Pietistic experience into his liberal theology. From the outset Busch challenges any assumption that Barth's relation to Pietism was that of a critical, distant enemy. Rather, Barth is presented as an irenic if "troublesome" friend of Pietism and its concerns. Barth's description of his family heritage and upbringing speaks of his great grandfather as "an edifying and joyous Pietist in the best sense of the word" and his grandmother as a "gentle Pietist." His father, Fritz, describes his own "conversion" as "new birth" and an entrance into lasting "personal contact with Jesus." Barth praised both his father and Wilhelm Herrmann as expressing "Pietism in the best sense of the word." Hence, says Busch, Barth got to know Pietism "in its best light," "from the inside with the eyes of a friend," so that his liberal theology embraced a positive Pietistic "type".

This first part also focuses on Barth's critiques of Pietism in the first and second editions of the *Römerbrief*. Busch carefully examines Barth's interpretation of Romans in both editions as they relate to Pietistic theology. In the first edition, Barth goes after Pietism's emphasis on individual *experience* of God – the very thing he praised as liberal. This theme shifted its emphasis in the second edition. By the late 1920s, Barth returned to positing an affinity between Pietism and the Enlightenment in terms of experience and revelation. Whereas Pietism was to be lauded for taking up the critical question of the daily life/discipleship of the individual believer, it was to be strongly challenged on its "'independent interest in man,' by which it paves the way for 'Schleiermacher's reversal of theology into anthropology' in the form of centering theology around the 'statements of pious man's experience'." (265) Here revelation is again a "predicate of man."

In the second edition of the *Römerbrief*, Barth's focus shifts toward what it means to actually "possess God" in one's "inner life." Of particular concern is the understanding of the efficacy of grace in conversion and its practical effects on the life of the believer as an experience of the Holy Spirit. Barth appreciated Pietism's conviction that works could never create the possibility for God's grace. Nevertheless, he argued that in Pietism, *sola gratia* failed to keep the cross central and moved beyond it into a life in the Spirit that ceased to acknowledge the continuing reality of their fallenness. As he put it, they moved from Romans 7 into Romans 8 like walking from one house to another —and with the new house was the assurance of grace as a security or "possession" rather than the *free* gift of God to *sinners* who never cease to be so.

Moreover, he considered Pietism's renunciation of meritorious works to be compromised by the belief that one can confidently and directly lay hold of the divine through the "negative works" of repentance, humility

and self-denial. Barth labeled this the "Pharisaism of the tax collector." In an extreme statement made in 1927, he spoke of such "attainment" of grace as a "Semi-Pelagianism which entered Protestant theology in the 18th century through the doubly opened gate of Rationalism and Pietism, achieving a triumph in Schleiermacher, the like of which had hardly been experienced in the Middle Ages."

The second part of the book deals with the Pietistic response to Barth's second *Römerbrief* (they largely ignored the first edition). Among the things they considered lacking, besides an adequate understanding of Scripture (why else would Barth challenge them?), was a serious understanding of the lived experience of God's Presence. While it is not *human* experience that counts, there is nevertheless a divine experience effected in human beings where one inwardly but really participates and shares in divine reality that is immediately present.

In this case, as with most others, however, they failed to hear the full extent of Barth's argument and responded to his statements out of context. This was due mainly to their difficulty in understanding both the form and content of Barth's dialectical theology. They regularly missed the affirming "yes" in their reaction to the resounding "no". The temptation was to "correct" his thought by supplementing its perceived weaknesses with their own theology in a "yes, but" approach or to reframe his argument in liberal terms and then dismiss him out of hand. In the process, they often overlooked the crucial point of his critique which applied to them as well. For instance, in affirming Barth's criticism of liberalism, they "agreed" that the way liberalism went about overcoming the distance between God and humankind was an "idolatry of the self". Barth, on the other hand, argued that the assumption of *any form of* direct immediacy between God and man was an idolatry of the self. The Pietists missed the point, and supplemented the "yes" with what they considered to be lacking in Barth's theology—the daily, unmediated experience of God's Presence.

There are also a number of excurses in Part Two, the most troubling of which is an analysis of the socio-ethical and political views of numerous *Gemeinshafts-bewegung* during the 1920s which eventually led to alignment with German Nazism. Busch reviews the literature of the *Gemeinshaftsbewegung* in this period, noting how their criticism of Barth's theology coincided with their self-understanding as living in the present manifestation of the "new creation". Believing their movement to be "God's work" and under God's "blessing", they proceeded to align their realized eschatology with right wing extremism, so that the "new creation" and German nationalism were inseparable. Wanting to be known by this "fruit", says Busch, the Pietists dug a riverbed for the things to come. (This section identifies a posture that bears striking similarities to certain positions taken in the US around the latest presidential election.)

The last part of the book asks whether Barth and the Pietists learned anything from each other in this "dialogue". Busch argues that both parties start from positions that make it difficult to enter into serious "inner Christian dialogue". Barth attempts to "correct" the theology of all of the Church from an unaccountable, unlocatable, sovereign position, and the Pietists accuse Barth of lacking faithfulness to Scripture from an unassailable high ground as "Biblical authorities".

This leads Busch to reflect on a second critical issue, raised even more eloquently in a later essay summarizing Barth's life-long engagement with Pietism, which serves as the Epilogue. That is, when we start from a different set of assumptions and organize a whole theological system accordingly, are we in fact saying the *same thing differently*, as Barth liked to assert, or are we actually *saying something different*? If each party says "yes, but" and supplements the original with something foreign, doesn't that change the "yes"? Busch cries "foul" at attempts to keep a favorable "half" of another's theology and then "supplement" it with one's own (a cry unevenly raised against the Pietists more than Barth). Busch states that, "[Barth's] whole theology was certainly in need of criticism, and it was only capable of critique in that one thought through the 'entire thing' in a fundamentally new way in order then to say 'the same thing differently', to use Barth's words. It was only theologically meaningful to criticize this theology in such a way" (176); Christian dialogue today generally takes this form of "yes, but", however. Theological positions are increasingly "supplemented" with others while failing to acknowledge that particular meaning is derived from that theology's underlying assumptions and system as a whole. Busch does not tell us how dialogue would occur, what the result would be if whole theological systems were critiqued by other whole systems, or if it is even possible in this pluralist era.

The Epilogue has a few prophetic moments as it finally assesses Barth's critique in terms of (1) individualism and self-experience as the source and norm for what is true about God, (2) the movement from the experiencing individual into fellowships of individuals which tends toward homogeneity and uniformity rather than unity in diversity (3) the dominating assimilation of an eschatological sense of "God in/among us" with a political or sociological ideology and (4) the defense of this powerful assimilation from the "high ground" of Scripture interpreted in such a way that a particular nation forcibly serves as the source and norm of God's Kingdom on earth.

In the end Busch points to the fact that, as Barth's theology developed throughout his life, his treatment of Pietism before 1930 was very different from volume 4 of the *Church Dogmatics*. Though Barth never "became" a "Pietist", by the last years of his life he looked for a theology of the Holy Spirit to emerge that would, in Busch's words, "testify to Christ in the present, reviving, transforming and renewing power of the Holy Spirit in a way that was quite different from what he saw himself being able to do. He explicitly cherished this hope 'in favor of the Pietists,' so that their old concern would shine and come to fruition in a whole new way in the church—not as truths of the individual whose life revolves around himself but as truths of the Holy Spirit who touches his heart." Hence the statement in the end of 1967: "What we need today is a new kind of Pietism," not simply a repetition of the old Pietism but its emergence in a new, inwardly renewed form, in such a way that its concern becomes understandable and prevails as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as a new Pentecost."

Although the English translation is rather wooden (even confusing in its abundant use of double negatives), the volume is marked both by Busch's critical rigor and empathy. It is an excellent addition to the Barth literature in English for the period it covers and the issues it raises.

**CHERITH FEE NORDLING**
Calvin College

## New Book Worthy of Note

***Apologetic for Filioque in Medieval Theology*** **(Paternoster Press) Paperback 1-84227-276-4 by Dennis Ngien, Tyndale Seminary in Toronto.** This book explores the defense of the *filioque* clause by four medieval theologians in the Catholic Church and seeks to show why it mattered so much to them: Anselm (1033-1109), Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), Thomas Aquinas (112-1275) and Bonaventure (1217-1274).

## Announcement

*Karl Barth Tabletalks* will be held from 4-8 July, 2005 in Safenwil. The program will consist in a tour of the village, the old Pfarrhaus, the Karl Barth Stube and the church. There will be a walking tour from Safenwil to Leutwil as well as study of some of Barth's many German sermons that have not yet been translated. The program will be in English and will involve discussion and interaction. Those interested in participating or wishing to be kept informed of future *Talbetalks* or wishing further information should contact: *Karl Barth Tabletalks*, 16 Victoria Street, Slough SL1 1PR, United Kingdom.

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Please remember that paying your dues insures that the Barth Society will be able to continue offering timely conferences that provide a forum for scholars to discuss the relevance of Barth's theology for the 21st century.

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